in any more sex bewildered George. He continued to coax me to climb up on his back, but I could no longer be seduced. He enticed me with money but I refused that, too. When I was sent to the store by my mother, I would go two blocks out of the way to another convenience store just to avoid the longing I recognized in his eyes, a longing that was partially stoked by my mutual desire. I would later discover that such a longing inhabits the eyes of many homosexuals, particularly those who believe themselves to be unable to come out of the closet.

The school year resumed itself uneventfully. The only change, other than those occurring because of puberty, was the increasing burden of carrying a secret. I was learning to live with it safely hidden away, but for how long? It was surely dangerous knowledge. There was no one I could tell about my sexual adventures with George. There was no previous reference of intimacy to compare to sex. I continued nurturing my desire in the long nights of my adolescence, quietly masturbating in my bed as my younger brother slept above on the upper bunk.

Black male adolescent survival in a ghetto context made me realize the *necessity* of having a girlfriend, a female I could be seen walking home after school. It would be my luck to date girls who were "good," girls who were not going to experiment with sex beyond kissing and fondling, and even that was often only tolerated at a minimum if tolerated at all.

I was not the kind of male to force the issue of going all the way sexually. For me, it was enough to have a cover for my *true* desires, and that's what these girls were—covers. But I treated them with respect. They were girl *friends* more often than not.

I had the opportunity to have sex with one of the girls I dated. She agreed to skip school with me one day. We hid out at her house, our mutual motive: sex. After a long morning of petting and kissing the big moment arrived. We stumbled to her bedroom along an unfamiliar path that frightened and excited us. I was nervous because I expected her mother or father or one of her siblings to walk in and catch us.

In our adolescent nakedness we were beautiful, but if caught, we would have been seen as *being ugly*. We were sixteen and fifteen and ripe with curiosity and desire. Her skin was honey gold, smooth, so soft to my touch. Her breasts were full and sweet, the nipples brown and swollen by my tongue. Her hair was plaited in thick braids that coiled atop her head like snakes. We were both virgins. Nothing in our timid sex education classes at school or our evasive discussions at home had prepared us for walking into her bedroom to face our beautiful nakedness.

I believe we both felt we had to go through with the act because we had gone so far. In my mind, George appeared, but that was *different*. He had not instructed me about girls or young women. No one had. I kept hearing the older boys scat about breaking the cherry, but there was no cherry hanging between her legs when I looked. What was there was wet and warm to my fingers.

She laid so still on her bed. I knelt above her, fondling her breasts, kissing her, imagining these must be the things to do to seduce her. Neither of us spoke. As our breathing escalated I grabbed my cock and guided the head toward her vagina. She opened her legs to show me the mouth that was there, wet and waiting. Sunlight poured over us. Sweat bathed our bodies. We were straining ourselves to break rules we were taught not to break. We exerted ourselves against everything we were told not to do.

I pressed my head against the wet mouth. I pushed. She pulled away. I inched forward. Pushed. She pulled away again.

"Am I hurting you?" I asked nervously.

"Yes," she said softly.

"We don't have to do this," I assured her, saying this